

Chairman, Washburn

Committee Members

My name is Tom Barnes, I reside in Dillon, Montana

I am the President of the Montana Trappers Association

During the past two legislative session the Montana Trappers Association supported Trapper Education. What we did not support was the language of the bill that was presented.

House Bill 475, the bill before you today represents language changes that were suggested by several MTA board members and the education committee chairperson of the MTA. These changes were made and agreed upon by the Dept. of Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Montana Furbearers Alliance, the Montana Trappers Association, and in cooperation with the Montana Wildlife Federation, The Montana Stockgrowers, and The Montana Woolgrowers.

Most importantly these changes were made and agreed upon by Representative Connell, and for that on behalf of the MTA I would like to publicly thank Representative Connell.

With that said, on behalf of the Montana Trappers Association board of directors and our 450 plus members I would like to express our support of HB475 and respectfully ask that you do the same.

I would like however to clarify one thing. It is my understanding that yesterday this committee received a letter from the FWP that indicates that, and I quote.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has developed a state of the art model trapper safety and education curriculum that states, like Montana, can utilize and dovetail with current MTA material to meet the state's specific needs.

The reason I bring this to your attention is that since last September a committee of MTA members along with staff of the FWP has been working on the curriculum of the trapper safety and education program using the current MTA education manual and an education manual that was written and is being used in North

Dakota. But a new Montana curriculum manual that will be used in the future is far from being completed as the above statement indicates. This is a logistics situation and I am confident that a new Montana manual will be finished in plenty of time to be implemented by the passage of HB475.

Again my name is Tom Barnes from Dillon, Mt.

President Montana Trappers Association

Thank You